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LETTER DATED 24 APRIL 1996 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a statement by Mr. Tariq Aziz, Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq, dated 24 April 1996, on the talks with the United Nations Secretariat.

I should be obliged if you would have the text of this letter and its annex, the statement by the Deputy Prime Minister, circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Statement by the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq
dated 24 April 1996

Commenting on the results of the current stage of the talks with the United Nations, Mr. Tariq Aziz, Deputy Prime Minister, made the following statement:

The Iraqi delegation participating in discussions with the Secretariat, led by Ambassador Abdelamir Al-Ambari, has made every effort during the course of three long rounds of talks to reach agreement on the so-called "oil for food and medicine" formula, and has demonstrated, in accordance with instructions from the central authorities, the greatest possible flexibility in order to reach appropriate solutions to practical issues.

The first two rounds of talks between the Iraqi delegation and the United Nations Secretariat took place in a serious and professional climate. The two parties strove, in the context of an objective dialogue, to take into account their respective legitimate and practical concerns so as to find balanced solutions to practical issues.

The third round of talks began in the same spirit, raising the hope of reaching a balanced agreement, but the intervention of the United States and the United Kingdom in these talks has dimmed that prospect and occasioned a reversal on the part of the United Nations delegation. There have been two successive interventions of this kind relating to aspects which had previously been the subject of objective and balanced agreement.

Mr. Tariq Aziz further stated that members of the Security Council, in particular the permanent members, had agreed from the start of the talks to entrust the Secretary-General with concluding an agreement with the Iraqi party and had undertaken not to intervene in the talks. Nevertheless, the United States and British parties have failed to respect that undertaking by directly intervening in the details of the talks, thus preventing the conclusion of an agreement at the close of the third round.

Mr. Tariq Aziz also stated that it had been decided, in the morning of 24 April 1996, by agreement with the Secretary-General, to begin a fourth round of talks at the beginning of May.

In addition, Mr. Tariq Aziz stated that Iraq had, from the outset, engaged in the talks in order to reach a balanced agreement that would not infringe on its sovereignty or threaten its national unity while meeting the concerns of the United Nations. However, the repeated and arbitrary interventions by the United States and the United Kingdom in the talks on practical issues were likely to compromise them.

Finally, Mr. Tariq Aziz called on the members of the Security Council to play their proper role by dealing with the question impartially and preventing other members of the Council from intervening in the talks for specific political reasons which contravened the United Nations Charter and the rules of international law.